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INFO RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY 0523  
RUEHMIL/AMCONSUL MILAN PRIORITY 0199  
RUEHFL/AMCONSUL FLORENCE PRIORITY 3767  
RUEHNP/AMCONSUL NAPLES PRIORITY 3976  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ROME 000997

SIPDIS

EUR/RPM FOR BULKIN, CARLAND AND COPE  
SCA/A FOR VIEHE, REOTT AND ANGHA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/29/2019

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SUBJECT: AFGHANISTAN: ITALY SEEKS TO HEAL EGF RIFT WITH  
FRANCE

REF: A. PARIS 1154  
[1](#)B. ROME 851

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Classified By: Acting Political Minister-Counselor J. Liam Wasley for R  
easons 1.4 (B) and (D)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Italian officials are optimistic that they can come to an amicable agreement with France over the proposed deployment of a European Gendarmerie Force mission to Afghanistan. At the next meeting of the EGF governing committee in Paris, September 2-4, Italy will present ideas for EGF deployment that they expect will be acceptable to the French and will help patch up the differences that have emerged between the two EGF heavyweights since France launched its proposal just prior to the Strasbourg-Kehl NATO Summit. Italian officials say the most feasible scenario is the creation of an EGF HQ and training hub at Camp Invicta outside of Kabul. Italy's goal is to have an EGF contingent ready to offer at the NTM-A force generation conference in November, which may include French and Italian Gendarme units already deployed to Afghanistan under bilateral missions. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) Carlo Batori, Deputy Director of the Italian MFA Political-Military Office, told Poloff on August 27 that MFA, MOD and Carabinieri staff have been developing EGF proposals that they believe will be acceptable to the French, and will present them at the next EGF governing committee (CIMIN) meeting in Paris Sept 2-4. Now that Italy has been assigned the one-star post in charge of coordinating police training within NTM-A, Italian officials are eager to patch up disagreements with the French and get EGF units deployed under the NTM-A framework. The Italian proposals will likely focus on using Camp Invicta outside of Kabul (currently occupied by Italian army units) as an EGF HQ and hub training facility. The French have already expressed interest in using Camp Invicta for this purpose.

[1](#)3. (C) The plan would require the consent of the Afghan Ministry of Defense to use the facility for training Afghan Police, who fall under MOI, but if Camp Invicta is not available, there are other options. Batori said Italy is not opposed to France's proposal to have multinational EGF units deploy as Police Operational Mentor Liaison Teams (POMLTs) at the district level, but noted that this would be more

complicated than having each country deploy its own POMLTs in areas where it already has troops stationed -- hence the benefit of folding EGF into the NTM-A structure, where force protection issues can be resolved collectively.

¶4. (C) The French have made their frustration with Italian slow-rolling of EGF deployment planning known to the Italians and to the other EGF members (Spain, Portugal, Netherlands, Romania, and observers Poland and Turkey), but Italy has maintained all along that (1) any EGF involvement in police training should compliment, not duplicate existing mechanisms such as EUPOL and CSTC-A, and (2) it should take place within the framework of the NATO Training Mission in Afghanistan (NTM-A).

¶5. (C) When France launched its EGF initiative for Afghanistan just prior to the NATO Summit in April, Italy looked upon it with some suspicion as a French effort to seize the lead on Gendarme-style training in Afghanistan -- an area in which Italy had already invested significant planning and resources -- and to create an unnecessary third training and mentoring pillar to add to CSTC-A and EUPOL. In recent years the Italian Carabinieri have taken on an increasingly larger role in international police training efforts. The Carabinieri have trained almost 5,000 Iraqi National Police under NTM-I and in 2008 they took over the U.S.-led training of the Afghan National Civil Order Police (ANCOP), in cooperation with CSTC-A. Italian planners were in the process of designing a proposal to further expand Carabinieri training in Afghanistan when the French announced the idea of the EGF mission (without consulting first with other EGF members, the Italians claim). Italian officials at the time characterized the proposal as poorly thought-out and designed for political effect. If France wanted to give a

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"European" stamp to police training efforts, they said, they would have done better to send units to the perennially under-resourced EUPOL mission.

¶6. (SBU) Italy's 40 Carabinieri based at Adraskan (Herat Province) have trained over 1,000 ANCOP officers, and at the NATO Summit Italy offered to increase the number of trainers to 200, with deployments starting in September 2009. Carabinieri officials have told us that 20 of these additional trainers will go to staff NTM-A HQ, 20 will be added to the Adraskan training center, and 60 will deploy as POMLTs in RC-West (Note: the Carabinieri have requested a loan of Mine Resistant Armored Personnel Carriers (MRAPs) from CSTC-A for these POMLTs until they can procure their own armored vehicles). The remaining 60 will be set aside to open a second ANCOP training center (possibly at Camp Invicta). These units will deploy regardless of whether EGF is stood up, but they are theoretically available for EGF purposes. In addition, Italy has 17 Carabinieri assigned to EUPOL training centers in Kabul and Herat.

¶7. (C) Comment: Irritation with the French has run high among Italian officials over the EGF issue, and particularly among the Carabinieri, who have good relations with the French Gendarmerie but often compete with them for posts and resources in international police missions. However, Italian officials in general -- and MFA officials in particular -- do not want to be perceived as blocking one of President Sarkozy's flagship initiatives for NATO and for Afghanistan, and seem prepared to make whatever concessions are necessary to get the project moving and to get trainers deployed. End Comment.

THORNE